APPENDIX A

CONSULTATION LETTERS UNDER SECTION 7 OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/RIFO

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ecological Services
Rock Island Field Office
4469 48th Avenue Court
Rock Island, Illinois 61201
Tel: 309/793-5800 Fax: 309/793-5804

March 8, 2001

Douglas Mulvey
Harza Engineering Company, Inc.
Sears Tower
233 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6392

Dear Mr. Mulvey:

We have reviewed your February 19, 2001, request for information concerning any impacts to federally listed threatened or endangered species as a result of a proposed coal-fired generating plant to be built near Elkhart, Logan County, Illinois. We have the following comments.

To facilitate compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, Federal agencies are required to obtain from the Fish and Wildlife Service information concerning any species, listed or proposed to be listed, which may be present in the area of a proposed action. Therefore, we are furnishing you the following list of species which may be present in the concerned area:

Classification	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat
Endangered	Indiana bat	*Myotis sodalis*	Caves, mines (hibernacula); small stream corridors with well developed riparian woods; upland forests (foraging)

The endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) could potentially occur throughout the state in Illinois. During the summer, the Indiana bat frequents the corridors of small streams with well developed riparian woods as well as mature upland forests. It forages for insects along the stream corridor, within the canopy of floodplain and upland forests, over clearings with early successional vegetation (old fields), along the borders of croplands, along wooded fencerows, and over farm ponds and in pastures. It has been shown that the foraging range for the bats varies by season, age, and sex and ranges up to 81 acres (33ha). It roosts and rears its young beneath the loose bark of large dead or dying trees. It winters in caves and abandoned mines.

An Indiana bat maternity colony typically consists of a primary roost tree and several alternate roost trees. The use of a particular tree appears to be influenced by weather conditions (temperature and precipitation). For example, dead trees found in more open situations were utilized more often during cooler or drier days while interior live and dead trees were selected during periods of high temperature and/or precipitation. It has been shown that pregnant and neonatal bats do not thermoregulate well and the selection of the roost tree with the appropriate microclimate may be a matter of their survival. The primary roost tree, however, appears to be utilized on all days and during all weather conditions by at least some bats. Indiana bats tend to be philopatric, i.e., they return to the same roosting area year after year.

Suitable summer habitat in Iowa and Illinois is considered to have the following characteristics within a ½ mile radius of the project site:

1) forest cover of 15% or greater;
2) permanent water;
3) one or more of the following tree species 9 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) or greater: shagbark and shellbark hickory that may be dead or alive, and dead bitternut hickory, American elm, slippery elm, eastern cottonwood, silver maple, white oak, red oak, post oak, and shingle oak with slabs or plates of loose bark;
4) at least 1 potential roost tree per 2.5 acres;
5) potential roost trees must have greater than 10% coverage of loose bark (by visual estimation of peeling bark on trunks and main limbs).

If the project site contains any habitat that fits the above description, it may be necessary to conduct a survey to determine whether the bat is present. If Indiana bats are known to be present, they must not be harmed, harassed or disturbed when present. Minor alterations of Indiana bat habitat (i.e. clearing) may be accomplished between the dates of October 1 and March 31. Large-scale habitat alterations within known or potential Indiana bat habitat should not be permitted without a bat survey and/or Section 7 consultation.

The Corps of Engineers is the Federal agency responsible for wetland regulation, and we recommend that you contact them for assistance in delineating the wetland types and acreage within the project boundary. Priority consideration should be given to avoid impacts to wetland areas. Any future activities in the study area that would alter wetlands may require a Section 404 permit. Unavoidable impacts will require a mitigation plan to compensate for any losses of wetland functions and values. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clock Tower Building, P.O. Box 2004, Rock Island, Illinois, 61201, should be contacted for information about the permit process.

These comments provide technical assistance only and do not constitute the report of the Secretary of the Interior on the project within the meaning of Section 2(b) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, do not fulfill the requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, nor do they represent the review comments of the U.S. Department of the Interior on any forthcoming environmental statement.

Douglas Mulvey 3

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments early in the planning process. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Heidi Woeber of my staff.

Sincerely,

Wayne A. Fischer
for Richard C. Nelson
Supervisor

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HARZA

HARZA ENGINEERING COMPANY, INC.
WATER & ENVIRONMENT

July 11, 2001

Mr. Richard C. Nelson, Supervisor
United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
4469 48th Avenue Court
Rock Island, Illinois 61201

NO OBJECTION
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Rock Island, Illinois
Supervisor 9/6/01 Date

Subject: Threatened and Endangered Species Review
Corbelt Energy Corporation Coal-Fired Generating Plant

Dear Mr. Nelson:

In response to your letter dated March 8, 2001 (included as Attachment 1), we provide the following information to support our conclusion that the proposed site identified for the Prairie Energy Power Plant near Elkhart does not have the suitable summer habitat for the Indiana bat. Your correspondence indicated that the following habitat characteristics were required within a ½ mile radius of the project site:

1. forest cover of 15% or greater;
2. permanent water;
3. one or more of the following tree species 9 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) or greater: shagbark and shellbark hickory that may be dead or alive, and dead bitternut hickory, American elm, slippery elm, eastern cottonwood, silver maple, white oak, red oak, post oak, and shingle oak with slabs or plates of loose bark;
4. at least 1 potential roost tree per 2.5 acres;
5. potential roost trees must have greater than 10% coverage of loose bark (by visual estimation of peeling bark on trunks and main limbs).

Figure 1 shows the general location of the proposed power plant and retention reservoir. Figure 2 shows a recent aerial photograph of the site. Site photographs are provided in Attachment 2 and referenced below. The proposed retention reservoir location is and has historically been used for agricultural row crop production (Pictures 1 and 2). No trees are located on the proposed retention reservoir site. The proposed power plant site will be located adjacent to existing coal mine structures. In general, the footprint of the power plant will impact areas that are currently maintained lawn (Pictures 3, 4, and 5 and an old farm site that is now owned by the coal mine (Pictures 6 and 7). Four mature trees (three Siberian Elms and one Silver Maple) are located at the old farm site. Areas within ½ mile of the proposed sites are either industrial or agricultural.

As can be seen from the attached photographs and Figure 2, the proposed site and areas within ½ mile of the site do not contain over 15% forest cover and therefore does not meet the habitat characteristics provided above. We ask that you provide a response concurring with our conclusions that the proposed site does not contain suitable habitat for the Indiana bat.

Sears Tower 233 South Wacker Drive Chicago, Illinois 60606-6392 Tel: 312.831.3000 Fax: 312.831.3999 Web: www.harza.com

If you have questions, please contact me at (312) 831-3859 or Joyce Coffee at (312) 831-3856. Thanks for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Douglas L. Mulvey, P.E.
Environmental Engineer

Photo accompanying letter dated July 11, 2001, to Mr. Richard C. Nelson, United States Department of Interior, as evidence that the site location does not meet the habit requirements of the Indiana Bat.

Proposed Site Looking Southwest
(Existing Coal Load Out Silo)

Photo accompanying letter dated July 11, 2001, to Mr. Richard C. Nelson, United States Department of Interior, as evidence that the site location does not meet the habit requirements of the Indiana Bat.

Proposed Site Looking Southeast

Photo accompanying letter dated July 11, 2001, to Mr. Richard C. Nelson, United States Department of Interior, as evidence that the site location does not meet the habit requirements of the Indiana Bat.

Proposed Site Looking North